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NEW COVERS FOR OLD CHAIRS

Broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, Monday, March 24, 1941, by the National Broadcasting Company and associated Blue Network stations.

--ooOoo--

WALLACE KADDERLY:

And now something very different from farming in Alaska, or Puerto Rico, or Hawaii isles --- something that comes close home to the everyday lives of most of us --- news growing out of the research of the Bureau of Home Economics --- as reported by Ruth Van Deman.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

With the able assistance of Wallace Kadderly. And you're right. I do have news today --- news of a new bulletin --- a bulletin we've been watching for and hoping would come with the robins and the crocuses, and all the other signs of spring.

KADDERLY:

This coundn't be a bulletin about spring hats, now could it --- or spring suits?

VAN DEMAN:

Spring suits for the sofas and chairs, yes. The title is ----- but here, you read it.

KADDERLY:

"Slip Covers for Furniture."

VAN DEMAN:

And the author, Bess Viemont Morrison, of the textile division.

KADDERLY:

That places this new bulletin then as another practical application of the Bureau of Home Economics textile research.

VAN DEMAN:

Right. Work on cottons chiefly, this time. More and more slip covers are being made of cotton. That was true even before war conditions cut down the supply of linen we used to import.

KADDERLY:

I don't know so much about what these covers are made of, but it certainly does seem to me more of them are being used on furniture. At least looking back to the chairs and sofas around our house, I don't seem to remember any separate covers, except maybe something to keep the dust off in the summer --- kind of loose coveralls.

(Over)

VAN DEMAN:

You're right again, Wallace; and as usual. It wasn't until smart interior decorators took hold of those loose coveralls and styled and streamlined them that we began to realize the possibilities of slip covers for furniture. Now they're a protection, a decoration, and sometimes a less expensive substitute for upholstery itself.

KADDERLY:

Well, isn't it quite a chore to make one of these smart, streamlined covers for a big chair?

VAN DEMAN:

You can't whip it up in an hour or two, if that's what you mean. Just like good workmanship on anything, it takes care for detail. First, careful measuring of the chair to know how much goods to buy. Then if it's a big chair, hard to fit, it's safer to make a pattern in muslin --- and lay every piece of that pattern on the goods before you cut. That makes sure the pieces run straight with the grain of the goods. And if it's a fabric with a pronounced design, it makes certain the design is centered and placed where you want it.

KADDERLY:

It wouldn't be very restful would it, to see a big bunch of posies standing on their heads in the middle of a chairback.

VAN DEMAN:

Very funny things can happen with stripes too.

KADDERLY:

That's so. I've seen chairs that reminded me of zebras on parade.

VAN DEMAN:

Haven't you just. Well, after a slip cover's cut out accurately, and the seams marked, it has to be pin-fitted. Then basted --- and seamed, with the right kind of strong seams and good firm stitching.

KADDERLY:

This business of making slip covers has a good many points in common with a good job of tailoring, it strikes me.

VAN DEMAN:

Quite a few, yes. And I'm glad you said that word tailoring. Wallace. That's a point to keep in mind in buying the material.

To be ideal for a slip cover, the fabric should be one that tailors well.

KADDERLY:

Turns good square corners --- keeps its press --- doesn't wrinkle too much when you sit on it --- is preshrunk so it won't shrink much more -----

VAN DEMAN:

Holds its color in the sunshine and the washtub --- is a good firm weave so the dust can't sift through to the furniture underneath. But is shouldn't be too stiff to sew easily.--- Yes, sir, that just about covers the qualities of an ideal fabric for slip-cover purposes.

KADDERLY:
How do these qualities line up with price?

VAN DEMAN:
Very favorably. That is, if you know what you want, it's possible to find ideal slip cover fabrics at moderate prices --- and in an assortment of very attractive colors and designs.

KADDERLY:
Ruth, as we've been talking here, I've been glancing through this new bulletin of Mrs. Morrison's. As you know, I've never made a slip cover, and I think I can safely say I never shall. But if I were going to, it seems to me this would tell me just about everything I would need to know.

VAN DEMAN:
That's because she tried everything out --- made every kind of a slip cover before she put the directions down on paper. She realized a person needs to have directions by picture, by diagram, and by words. So there they are.

KADDERLY:
Real working directions to produce that smooth, streamlined effect of the 1941 slip covers for furniture. Will you give Mrs. Morrison my congratulations?

VAN DEMAN:
I will. I asked her to come over to the studio today, so she could rise and take a bow.

KADDERLY:
Yes, why didn't she?

VAN DEMAN:
She's too busy on her next bulletin, she says.

KADDERLY:
Something more on the use of cotton fabrics, I expect.

Well, Farm and Home friends, Ruth Van Deman has slipped away from the microphone here and left with me this new bulletin "Slip Covers for Furniture." I'm glad to tell you that it's free and that if you want a copy, just send a card to the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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